

MANUFACTURING EXTENSION PARTNERSHIP

Success Stories from the Field

Alliance Rubber Co.

Arkansas Manufacturing Solutions

Alliance Rubber Corporation Begins Lean Enterprise Journey

Client Profile:

Alliance Rubber Corporation is the largest domestic producer of rubber bands in the United States. The company employs 210 people at its Hot Springs, Arkansas plant.

Situation:

Alliance Rubber Corporation (Alliance) realized that to remain competitive in the current business environment, it needed to be receptive to change. Alliance also realized that changes needed to be in a context that emphasized the on-going need for present and future change. Alliance believed that the concepts of lean enterprise could provide the context it needed, and contacted the Arkansas Manufacturing Solutions (AMS), a NIST MEP network affiliate, formerly known as the Arkansas Manufacturing Extension Network (the Network), for lean training and assistance.

Solution:

AMS led a series of service agreement projects for Alliance, partnering with the University of Arkansas at Little Rock's Institute of Economic Advancement (UALR IEA). AMS conducted a Principles of Lean Manufacturing workshop for Alliance's management team and key manufacturing employees. Next, AMS led Alliance through a value stream mapping exercise, in which the team documented every step of the production process for a major product line, identified waste and inefficiency, and developed an action plan to implement change. AMS and Alliance worked together during a lean blitz to make improvements in a short time frame.

Results:

Saved an estimated \$160,000 annually.
Reduced inventories by \$60,000.
Established context for change by embracing continuous improvement.

Testimonial:

"We are very pleased at the professionalism and expertise displayed by the personnel working for the Arkansas Manufacturing Solutions. Becoming a lean enterprise is not a one-time event, and we are pleased that we know we can count on the Arkansas Manufacturing Solutions for assistance and direction."

Jeff James, Manufacturing Operations Manager

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